

Murfreesboro Police Department

Media Release

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Detectives, Police Officers participate in child abuse awareness month

In 1983, Congress declared April to be National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Since that time, communities across our nation and here in Murfreesboro have taken this opportunity to raise local awareness about child abuse. During the month of April, Detectives and Police Officers work with community groups to raise awareness of the problem in our community.

The Criminal Investigations Division Special Victims Unit is tasked with investigating child abuse cases. Working in cooperation with the Child Advocacy Center, Department of Children's Services (DCS), the District Attorney's Office, the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, we were able to hold abusers accountable and successfully prosecute them to the fullest extent. In 2013, SVU detectives investigated 85 child abuse cases (sexual, physical and neglect) and 32 referrals from the (DCS). The Unit also has two Child Forensic Interview Specialists that can work with children to detect and gather evidence from victims of abuse.

As a Department, special importance is placed on detecting and prosecuting all abuse cases. In 2013 the Training Section incorporated specialized training called "Darkness to Light – Stewards of Children", a program designed to train officers in prevention, recognition and reaction to child sex abuse cases as part of the annual in-service training and is included in the 2014 curriculum. The Crime Prevention Section offers Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) classes that give women ages 14 and up the tools necessary to prevent and escape from sexual assaults. Likewise, the DARE Section teaches children ways to stop and report abuse.

Chief of Police and Board Chair of the Child Advocacy Center Glenn Chrisman stated: "We have a duty to protect children, the most vulnerable segment of our community, from the life-long effects of child abuse and child sex abuse. Our role in law enforcement is to prevent, detect and prosecute abusers while working closely with our community partners to minimize the impact on the victim. At MPD we train our officers to detect and prosecute these terrible crimes and provide education to the community to stop abuse before it happens. Please join us this month as we send a message to those that would harm children that we will not stop our efforts until all children are safe from abuse. Your awareness may help prevent the abuse of a child."

On Friday, April 11, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. the Rutherford County Coalition Against Child Abuse is sponsoring a community event in recognition of child abuse awareness month. The event is open to the public and will be held at the Department of Children's Services, 434 Jayhawk Court in Murfreesboro.

For more information about the child abuse awareness month event, please contact the Child Advocacy Center at 615-867-9000.
